

REMARKS

Claims 12-20, 22-29, 30-38 and 40-45 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 12, 22 and 38 are amended and claim 39 is canceled. No new matter is added. Reconsideration based on the foregoing amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the allowance of claims 18-20 and the indication that claims 17 and 30 contain allowable subject matter.

The Office Action rejects claims 12, 13, 15, 22, 23, 25-29, 31-34 and 37-45 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over U.S. Patent No. 5,384,628 to Takami et al. ("Takami"); rejects claims 14 and 36 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Takami in view of U.S. Patent Publication No. 2004/0053153 to Yaguchi et al. ("Yaguchi"); and rejects claims 16, 24 and 35 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Takami in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,594,462 to Ishii et al. ("Ishii"). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Takami discloses an invention directed toward a developing device in which a toner is mixed with a developer (col. 6, lines 14-17). In the Takami device, the toner is introduced via a sponge roller 26 and a toner supply roller 18 into a developing and agitating chamber (see Fig. 2). The developing and agitating chamber is separated from the toner storing chamber by a combination of the roller seal 38, the toner supply roller 18, the blade 28 and the blade holder 40 (col. 6, lines 10-14). In the developing and agitating chamber, the toner and the developer are mixed by the action of the lower transport roller 54, the upper transport roller 52, the lower screw 22 and the upper screw 20. Developer is introduced into the developing and agitating chamber via an opening 34a (col. 6, line 63 - col. 7, line 3 and Fig. 3A).

The Takami supply device including each of the upper transport roller 52, the upper screw 20, the lower transport roller 54, the lower screw 22, the toner supply roller 18 and the sponge roller 26 does not correspond to a device in which the entirety of the supply device is

shielded from the weight of the developing agent, as recited in claim 12. Rather, Takami discloses a device in which at least the sponge roller 26 and a portion of the toner supply roller 18 are exposed to the weight of the toner and are not completely shielded from the weight of the toner by the blade 28 and blade holder 40.

Further, Takami does not disclose a first wall that is disposed over the entirety of the supply device as recited in claims 15, 28 and 38.

Regarding claim 22, Takami does not disclose a developing device in which a space is provided between a free end of the first wall and the supply device, as recited in claim 22. Rather, Takami discloses an elastic blade 28 which contacts the toner supply roller 18 (col. 4, lines 17-20 and Figs. 2 and 9). Thus, the supply roller 18 cannot be considered spaced from the elastic blade 28.

Regarding claim 14, Yaguchi does not teach a packed bulk density of toner greater than or equal to 0.646 grams per milliliter at an initial use. Yaguchi does not teach any bulk density of the toner, or developing agent. Rather, in paragraph [0117], Yaguchi discusses a toner and its composition by percent weight. The only discussion of a bulk density deals with one ingredient in the toner, the 15% by weight of triiron tetroxide (Fe_3O_4) which has a bulk density of 0.65 with a specific particle size. As Yaguchi's toner includes the triiron tetroxide, but also has a polyester resin, a charge control agent, and a polypropylene wax, Yaguchi does not disclose a bulk density for the toner, or developing agent, which is what is claimed in pending claims 14 and 36.

Ishii does not cure the deficiencies of Takami with respect to the enumerated claims. Ishii indicates that the supply device (see element 10 of Fig. 1 of Ishii) is not shielded from the weight of the toner or developing agent.

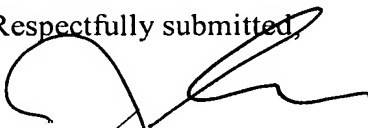
For at least these reasons, independent claims 12, 14, 15, 22, 28 and 38 are patentably distinct over the prior art. Further the claims depending from claims 12, 14, 15, 22, 28 and 38 are allowable for the foregoing reasons, as well as for the additional features that they recite.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 12-16, 22-29, 31-38 and 40-45, in addition to the allowance of claims 18-20, and the indication of allowability of claims 17 and 30 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,


James A. Oliff
Registration No. 27,075

Jesse O. Collier
Registration No. 53,839

JAO:JOC/ldg

Date: November 20, 2006

OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 19928
Alexandria, Virginia 22320
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

<p>DEPOSIT ACCOUNT USE AUTHORIZATION Please grant any extension necessary for entry; Charge any fee due to our Deposit Account No. 15-0461</p>
